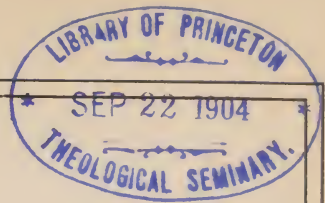


PER BV 2580 .R44 v.33-63

Neglected Arabia



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015



The
Arabian Mission
Quarterly Letters from the Field



Number Thirty-six, October to December, 1900

Muscat

- I. REV. JAMES CANTINE.—Our Mission Force.—Visit from a Bishop.—The Cemeteries, new and old.—Gain in Scripture Sales.—A new Colporteur.—A Retrospect and Prayer.

Babrein

- II. REV. S. M. ZWEMER.—Seed Time Statistics.
III. MRS. SHARON J. THOMS, M.D.—The Dispensary.—Operations for Shark Bite.—Need for a Hospital.—Christmas Festivities.

Busrab

- IV. REV. FRED. J. BARNY.—Amara.—Book Sales.

QUARTERLY LETTERS FROM THE ARABIAN MISSION

October=December, 1900.

MUSCAT.

REV. JAMES CANTINE.

Our Mission Force. Muscat has had for the first time in its history three resident missionaries, and the increase in our force has awakened much interest and many questions. I wish the same could be said of the work as well as of the workers, but as two of the three are wholly engaged in language study the sum total of missionary effort will not be more than in previous quarters.

Mr. Moerdyk, our latest recruit, reached us November 28th. He was fortunate enough to meet at Bombay the Zwemers, who were just returning to Bahrein, and the latter end of his eight week's journey was spent in their company. As at present we have a good teacher at Muscat it was thought best that he remain until the time of our annual meeting at Bahrein in January. Our little house has been a bit crowded, but so long as Muscat remains our bachelor station it will prove sufficient for any such emergency.

A Visit from a Bishop. We have recently enjoyed the passing visit of two other clergymen, the Bishop of Lahore and his chaplain. They came up from India for the special purpose of consecrating the burial place of Bishop French, who died here in 1891. The Bishop of Lahore was formerly a missionary, and now much interested in all missionary work, and it was a pleasure to meet him socially and attend the services he held both at the English consulate and on board H. M. S. "Cossack." At the request of the native Christians he also consecrated their new burial ground, which was given by the Sultan for that purpose a short time ago. It is just a few rods

*The Cemeteries,
New and Old.*

back of our house, and one of my duties the past quarter has been the collecting and using of over a hundred dollars for the erection of a substantial wall about it. It was pleasant to find the Catholic community here uniting heartily with us in this matter. As they have no priest they accept in time of need our services, and several attend our English preaching and send their children to Sunday-school. In the English cemetery a marble slab brought up from Bombay has just been placed over the grave of our dear brother Stone, who died here last year. It bears simply his name and age with the words, which meant so much for him, "And he left all, rose up, and followed him." We would that the little cove on the sea-shore were not so far away so that we could visit it oftener, but isolation of the body, living or dead, does not mean the same of the soul, and he still is often with us in our thoughts.

Although many of the Arab sheikhs from up country have called upon us, yet we in our turn have done no touring. Repairs to our dwelling house have kept me almost constantly at home. Nothing is done well here except under the eye of the owner, and not even then, unless extra care is taken. All this expenditure of time bears but little direct relation to mission work, and yet it is difficult to see how it can be avoided.

Our Bible work the past quarter has been sadly hampered by the absence of our colporteur Yusuf. After having been with us for nearly five years he left last spring for a visit to his people at Mosul, expecting to return in October. Other men were provided until that time, but he himself did not

*Gain in
Scripture Sales.*

appear until December. Thus our shop was closed for over two months and our Scripture sales were correspondingly small. However, in spite of this, the total for the year is 1433, two and a half times as many as any previous term. The gain has been through having new men who could be pushed, and in doing more touring. A pleasant episode last month was the selling of nearly sixty portions by our servant Aly. He had business which took him up into the mountains, and was so keen upon taking scriptures with him, that finally we gave him a number of Proverbs and Genesis, with a few Psalms. We hesitated about giving him Gospels, not feeling quite sure that he would rightly value

A New Colporteur.

and commend the life of our Lord. Aly cannot read, but has imbibed much Christian knowledge. He has, in a measure, cut himself off from his relations, and confesses with more or less directness that he is a Christian. He sold all his stock of books and gave us an interesting account of his experience. He certainly knows the country and understands the people better than any colporteur we may bring from Central Turkey, and for our sake, as well as his own, we hope and pray that he will fully know and accept of the truth which he loves to commend.

Our holiday season, the first which I have spent at Muscat, passed very quietly. The three of us enjoyed our Christmas dinner together, and the boys were made happy by presents and an extra allowance for food. A gift from a kind friend, Mrs. Betten of Orange City, was expended in books which were distributed among all the boys, from Bagdad to Bombay. Most of these, our freed slave boys, are doing well, and at a future date I hope to mention them and their prospects more in detail.

And this letter brings us to the end of another year! One closes the record with a deep sense of grief and regret that so little of real aggressive work has been chronicled from Muscat, and that so few of our opportunities have been met and used. God has been very good to us in many ways, and has blessed even our faint-hearted efforts, but the infinite possibilities open to consecrated zealous service in Oman seem scarcely to have been attempted. For the New Year before us and you, the greatest need is for constant prayer that your missionaries here in this corner of Arabia may, with faith and courage, say as did Caleb, "Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it."

BAHREIN.

REV. S. M. ZWEMER.

At the close of the year we want you to *study* the accompanying table with us, and join us in praising God for the joy and the privilege of seed-sowing in Arabia. The record of this station does not equal that of Muscat or Busrah, and yet you will see that our total Scripture sales are over nine hundred, which is over two hundred

*Seed-Time
Statistics.*

*A Retrospect
and Prayer.*

more than last year. These Scripture portions were, many of them, planted in places never before visited by a colporteur; three-fourths of the sales represent so many heart-to-heart talks in persuading Moslems to read the Gospel. The mileage of our tours at this station is very high because we travel long distances by sea to reach the coasts southward. You must read between the lines to get the statistics of heat and headaches and fevers, as well as the discouraging days when colporteurs return without a single sale reported.



MISSION HOUSE, BAHREIN—EXTERIOR.

Do you notice the large number of religious books? These include such classics as "Sweet First Fruits" and "Beacon of Truth"; a vast number of smaller controversial leaflets are not recorded as they were given away at the dispensary or on journeys. The English and Portuguese books were mostly sold on board of steamers in the harbor. This year we found a place for Moody's colporteur-library as well as for the excellent publications of the Madras Tract Society. The total value of sales is small because we sell everything at cost price, and in Arabic too the

Bible is the cheapest book on the market. This is as it should be. We believe all these words of witness, because they are God's Word, will not return void. The latent life that is in them will become potent in God's own time, and then they that sow and they that reap will rejoice together. Will you not show this table to some friends and interest them also in sowing seed in Arabia ?

BAHREIN STATION.

BIBLE AND BOOK SALES FOR 1900.

LANGUAGE.	BIBLES.	TESTA- MENTS.	POR- TIONS.	SCRIP- TURES.	RELIG- IOUS.	EDUCA- TIONAL	TOTAL BOOKS.
Arabic.....	11	14	695	720	148	177	1,045
Persian.....	4	10	138	152	20	1	173
Turkish.....	..	..	12	12	..	..	12
Hebrew.....	4	1	7	12	..	..	12
Syriac.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Gujerati.....	1	1	13	15	1	..	16
English.....	..	4	..	4	38	141	183
French.....	..	2	..	2	..	..	2
Arabic-English .....	..	..	..	..	..	8	8
Turkish-English .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Arabic-Turkish .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Portuguese.....	6	10	..	16	..	..	16
Armenian.....	1	..	..	1	..	..	1
	<u>27</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>865</u>	<u>934</u>	<u>207</u>	<u>327</u>	<u>1,468</u>

	SCRIP- TURES.	ALL BOOKS.		
Sales to Muslim.....	858	1,218	Tours made.....	11
“ Jews.....	18	27	Mileage.....	3,735
“ Christians.....	42	200	Day's Work by	
“ Hindus.....	16	23	Colporteurs....	487

MRS. S. J. THOMS, M.D.

When Dr. Thoms wrote his letter last quarter he had been here but a short time, but he thought he saw hopeful indications for the medical work. We are glad to say this quarter's work has

*The
Dispensary.*

shown that these hopes were well grounded, for there has been a good attendance at the dispensary from the first. The average attendance has been about fifty, and sometimes the number has reached nearly one hundred. At other times, when the weather is cold and rainy, there are few who brave the wind and mud for the sake of medicine. Even now, during Ramadan, when strict Moslems not only abstain from food and drink in the day time, but also from taking medicine, there is a goodly number who come for their medicine and take it at night.

They are, many of them, more fanatical than usual at this time, yet they listen respectfully each morning to the Scripture reading and prayer. They also do not seem to resent the exhortation to fast, not from food, but from their besetting sins, which is the fast approved of God.

There have been several drawbacks to the work during the quarter, of which one has been the lack of a trained dispensary assistant. Another has been the failure of a large drug order to arrive until six weeks after it should have been at hand thereby causing much inconvenience.

However, the bright aspects of the work have been more than the dark, and we thank God for prospering our efforts to so much greater extent than our weak faith had dared to expect.

*Operations for
Shark-bite.*

Three more men came from the pearl banks with injuries received from sharks. They were in much the same condition as the one described in the last letter. These all required the amputation of a limb, and have all done well. One was a lad of fourteen or fifteen, who was so weakened by weeks of native treatment of his wound that it was questionable if he could stand the effects of the anæsthetic, but he began to improve at once. He is an exceptionally bright boy, and we are trying to induce him to attend our little mission school.

Another man came with one hand so badly injured that it was necessary to amputate a finger. Three cataract operations have been performed thus far, and several less important eye operations. The restoring of sight to those who have long been blind is regarded as a miracle, and is helping to break down the prejudice toward our work.

Beside these there have been a large number of minor surgical procedures, and our need of a hospital has been many times emphasized. You can well understand how unsatisfactory it is to send a patient away after operation, knowing he has no better place to go than a tent, which may become so thoroughly soaked that he has no dry place in which to lie, to say nothing of a clean one.

We have already on more than one occasion kept a patient in a corner of the lower verandah of our house, but now the weather



MISSION HOUSE, BAHREIN—INTERIOR.

is too cold for that. This is the season for pneumonia and other acute illnesses brought on by cold and exposure. One man who came this morning suffering intensely has been taken into a store-room downstairs, and while the cold winds find many entrances to our good new house, we know of at least two very sick men over whom the winds have almost full sweep.

A German merchant taken sick while on a business visit to the island was cared for two weeks in what was then an unoccupied room of the mission house.

*Need for a
Hospital.*

It can be seen from this that the in-patient department has already been established. We are having offers of land and houses here for a hospital, and now we want our friends at home to enable us to utilize some one of these or something we may judge to be better.

During this quarter not a great deal has been done especially for the women. One reason has been that we have as yet no suitable place in which to treat them. Enough has been done, however, to show the need of work among them even more than among the men. More women are coming now than at first, and we are very hopeful of this branch of the work also, but it will take some time to develop it.

It has, indeed, been a busy quarter, as beside the work in the dispensary there have been numerous calls made at the houses of patients. These visits have, in some instances, been the occasions of good talks and prayer with the sick ones.

We who are so cut off from festivities have to make the most of all occasions which we can make festive, and so we tried to have as merry a Christmas as was possible. A bunch of date branches tied together and set up in the corner of Mr. Zwemer's dining-room made an admirable Christmas tree. This and the abundant refreshments served were greatly enjoyed by our native friends and the children. There was present quite a cosmopolitan assembly numbering twenty-five, and made up of 8 Americans, 1 Australian, 5 Mesopotamians, 3 Africans, 2 Portuguese, 3 Persians and the rest Arabs.

On Christmas morning we had service in the chapel. It was conducted partly in English and partly in Arabic. After that we older members of the family all went for a ride on donkeys out to some beautiful date gardens. We often see things here in the East that remind us of Bible incidents, and as we rode through the market place and passed three camels waiting in a group for their drivers I was reminded of the three wise men who probably left their camels in the streets of Jerusalem while they went to inquire, "Where is He that is born king of the Jews?" on that first Christmas day.

It was very refreshing to get out into the gardens again and the ride in cool, bracing air put us in fine trim for the

*Christmas
Festivities.*

bountiful Christmas dinner which Mrs. Zwemer provided at the close of what had been a truly happy day.

We observed the close of the year and the century with a watch-night service. All our native helpers were present, and seemed to catch the spirit of the occasion. I am sure we all felt our lack of service during the past year and are determined by the help of the Holy Spirit to be better ambassadors for Him during as much of the new year as we are permitted to live and serve. And what we wish for ourselves we wish with the kindest of New Year greetings for all our friends both at home and on the field.

BAHREIN, January 1, 1901.

BUSRAH.

REV. FRED. J. BARNY.

Amara. Amara, the substation on the Tigris, has not been mentioned of late in these reports, so I will begin this time by writing about it. Owing to a number of circumstances the missionary was unable to visit it this year until last month, and then he could only stay a short time as he is alone in this station. The immediate occasion of the visit was certain unpleasant reports about the colporteur who had been in the bookshop for several years at that place. The investigation of these reports and finding them to be true was a sad experience indeed, for the man had been one of our most trusted employees. He was replaced by another man, and the work thus started afresh. Amara is a growing place, and is even now an important one, and is sure to become more so. Since strict quarantine has been enforced against Mahommerah the pilgrims and other travelers from Persia come to Amara in preference to the former place and considerable merchandise carried from there. The town is growing to such an extent that it may be said to be booming. A private company has bought a section of land nearly as large as the old town, and are building practically a complete town with bazaars and grain markets, coffee shops and dwellings. The magnitude of the operations and the energy with which they are being pushed are very unusual in these parts. Like many booming towns it has a bad reputation; the captains of the river steamers

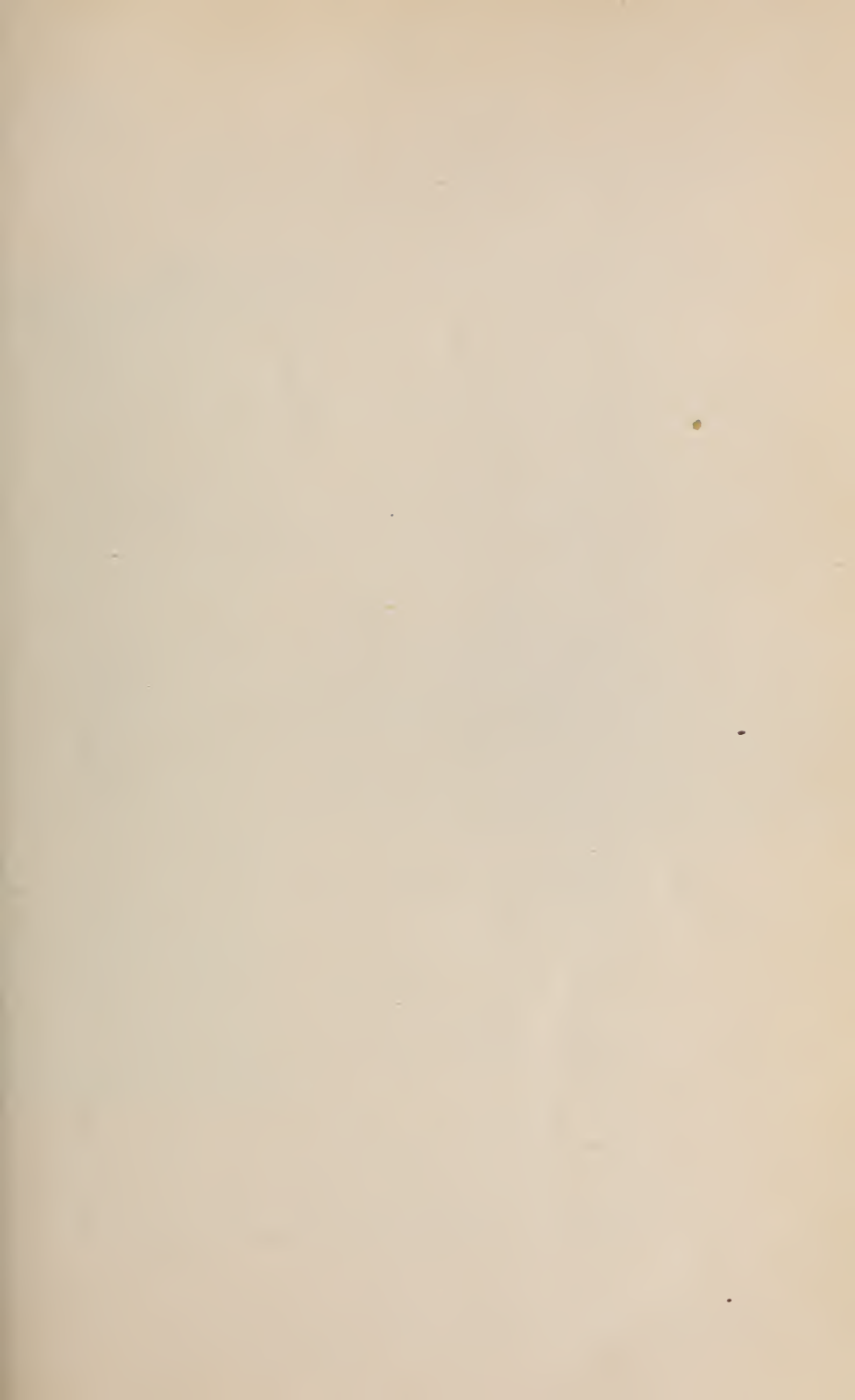
tell me that they dare not leave anything loose or unwatched about the steamer on calling there. There is a great deal of the grossest immorality both among Moslems and Christians. One of the priests of the place asserted that the Christians were worse than the Moslems, that their sins if put in a balance would outweigh those of the latter; nor was a compliment intended for the Moslems. The man of leisure who has an income whose source is doubtful is very common there. Such is Amara, and the man stationed there must shine brightly to shine at all into such darkness. There is a constant sale of scriptures from the shop, though it is small. Considering the degree of illiteracy, however, this is not discouraging. As I stated before, the shop was not visited before this year, and on this occasion it could only be for a number of days. Next year it is our hope to have another member of the mission here when this outstation, as well as the one on the Euphrates, will be visited more often and for longer periods, which will be much to the benefit of our work.

Book Sales. While this letter should relate the events of the quarter, it will not be amiss to say a few words about the book sales for the year. They have been remarkably good, showing a substantial increase of at least twenty per cent. The report of Bible work for 1900 was made out a month ago for the British and Foreign Bible Society, from which we receive a grant in aid. For the year from December 1, 1899, to November 30th, 1900, the number of scriptures sold was 1365. This increased number was not attained by employing more men, but means for the most part better work on the part of our present staff. Analysis of the returns shows that seventy per cent. were disposed of to Muslims, thus showing that our object to reach this part of the population is carried out. Another fact is that the great majority of the sales is made by the men who sell in bazaars and who go on tours. This does not mean that the work of the shops does not count for much; for though a man in a book shop sells only one book a day that usually implies an effort on his part and also some conversation about it, while the man who is touring may sell ten in a day, but he moves on rapidly from place to place and cannot follow up his work. The two kinds of work are quite separate and supplement each other. Below is a table of

the sales as included in the report referred to. The total for the official year of the mission, which closes December 31st, is not yet complete :

	Arabic.	Persian.	Turkish.	Hebrew.	Syriac.	English.	French.	Arabic-Eng.	Turkish-Eng.	Arabic-Turk.	Armenian.	German.	Total, 1900.	Total, 1899.
Bibles.....	11	1	2	35	.	5	1	.	.	.	1	.	56	20
Testaments...	9	1	8	11	.	4	4	.	.	.	.	1	38	57
Portions.....	927	61	84	178	3	9	1	2	3	3	.	.	1271	1079
Totals.....	947	63	94	224	3	18	6	2	3	3	1	1	1365	1356

N. B.—The Arabian Mission depends for its support and the extension of its work, not on the treasury of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America, though under its care and administration, but upon contributions specifically made for this purpose. The churches, societies and individuals subscribing are not confined to the Reformed Church. Members of other denominations are among its supporters and its missionaries. Regular gifts and special donations are invited from all who are interested in Mission work in Arabia. Regular contributors will receive quarterly letters and annual reports, without application. All contributions, or applications for literature or information, should be sent to "THE ARABIAN MISSION," 25 East 22d Street, New York.



THE "NEGLECTED PENINSULA"

Arabia

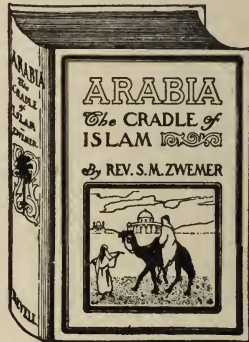
The Cradle of Islam

BY

Rev. S. M. Zwemer
F.R.G.S.

of the Arabian Mission, R.C.A.

Studies in the Geography, People and Politics of the Peninsula; with an account of Islam and Missionary Work. With Maps and numerous Illustrations from Drawings and Photographs.



8vo, cloth, net \$1.50; postage, 20c. (Published at \$2.00.)

THE REV. HENRY N. COBB, D.D., Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, R. C. A., writes: "I welcome the issue of this long-expected volume with great pleasure. It embodies the results of wide and diligent reading in more than one language, and of careful observation and experience on the part of the author. It is written in excellent style and puts the reader in possession of information concerning an interesting country and long-neglected mission field which can nowhere else be brought together, and is altogether a noble and notable contribution to missionary literature. It should have a peculiar interest for members of the Reformed Church, as being the work of one of its own missionary sons."

"This volume comes at once into the vacant place of an up-to-date authority for English-speaking people upon the 'Neglected Peninsula.' It is the fruit of ten years' residence in missionary service at Bahrein, on the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf, a place noted for its pearl fisheries. It is one of the many notable instances in which missionary explorers have laid the civilized world under obligations of gratitude for contributions to general knowledge of the world. The comprehensive scope of the volume covers a still wider range of interest, both scientific and commercial, historical and literary, sociological and religious, in which the author has availed himself of the most recent authorities in supplementing his personal observation. Mr. Zwemer writes, of course, in a missionary interest, as a representative of the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church of America."—*The Outlook*.

"The author speaks from authority, based upon exceptional opportunities of observation.... It will broaden our vision, enlarge our knowledge and deepen our interest."—*Rev. James S. Dennis, D.D.*

All the new and standard missionary books constantly in stock. Send for lists and quotations.

BOARD OF PUBLICATION, R. C. A.

25 East 22d St., New York

Princeton Theological Seminary Library



1 1012 01465 2137

FOR USE IN LIBRARY ONLY
PERIODICALS



The man in library calls

